

Abstracts

Plenary Lectures

Elizabeth Robertson (Elizabeth.Robertson@glasgow.ac.uk)

‘Seeing is believing’: veridical perception in Chaucer and some late medieval and early modern images

Within the context of some images of Mary Magdalene and the apostle Thomas’ sight of the newly risen Christ that capture the complexity of the mind/body dialectic involved in seeing truly, I shall explore how Chaucer, in two incidents in his writing, Troilus’ first sight of Criseyde in *Troilus and Criseyde* and January’s shifting perception of his wife’s adultery in *The Merchant’s Tale*, represents the processes by which seeing yields a judgment of truth. In the first example, Chaucer’s representation of Troilus’s first sight of Criseyde, Chaucer, I shall argue, asserts the resistance the object of sight poses to the mind’s ability to impose its will on the exterior world. In the second passage from Chaucer’s *The Merchant’s Tale*, Chaucer asserts the power of the mind to “believe,” that is to come to false judgments about what it perceives in order to achieve other goals. Drawing on medieval optical theory including the new theory of *perspectiva* articulated by theologians such as Grosseteste and Roger Bacon as well as medical treatises concerning blindness and the nature of optical illusions, Chaucer broadens the focus of these theories to consider not only the physiology of the perception of objects, but also the complexities that arise when the subject perceives an object that turns out to be another perceiving subject.

Chris Woolgar (C.M.Woolgar@soton.ac.uk)

Why does colour matter? Describing objects in the later Middle Ages

It is self-evident to us that everything has colour, but the reasons for it have varied considerably over time. On one level, colour might be a signifier of meaning, of the nature of an object, of its humoral composition; on another, it might seem to be no more than a convenience in distinguishing one item from another; and on yet another, it might be a key to identity, for example, grouping individuals by their livery. This paper uses the descriptions of objects and other property in administrative documents, such as wills, inventories and accounts, to examine the range of colours in common use, and to define those areas where colour seems to have been particularly important in day-to-day life. While some areas employ colour ‘codes’, with specific meanings – as in heraldry – others offer a wide range of nuance in the hues they identify, for example, in the terms used to describe textiles.

Panel papers

Alexandra Anokhina (anokhina.alexandra@gmail.com)

The solar metaphors in Jan van Ruusbroec's concept of sight

This paper examines the concept of divine illumination according to Jan van Ruusbroec’s metaphors of Sun and light and how they illustrate his critical view on the Eckhart’s theology. The central point of Ruusbroec’s theology is the presence of two visions in human soul which percept light – external and internal. The Internal vision is associated with the divine illumination and explained through natural images. Ruusbroec used common metaphors of

the Sun and light to describe Christ in symbolic way. However, he also operated with original analogies, using which he holds an elegant discussion with Eckhart.

The most representative metaphor (The Spiritual Espouse I. VI) was the midday Sun shining over two mountains, which reflect its rays and illuminate a deep dale between them, making it warm and blossomy. Ruusbroec explained this symbol as a human soul, which was illuminated by divine grace reflected by “two desires” – to serve God and achieve virtues. Firstly, in contrast to Eckhart Ruusbroec did not interpret light in the intellectual way. Secondly, I consider that in this case Ruusbroec discussed not only with Eckhart’s and Augustinian grades of perceptions (morning, midday, evening) in the solar symbolism, but also with his metaphor of the Morning star. In the sermon “Quasi Stella matutina in medio...” Eckhart associated the righteous human soul with the Morning star, which always follows the Sun. Consequently, a soul should always be present and stay with God and nothing must distract it. In this interpretation Ruusbroec’s example of the passive illuminated objects contrasts with Eckhart’s dynamical symbol of the Star. Eckhart explained the idea of rejection of all internal senses (desire) as a way of following the God. Ruusbroec criticized this point of Eckhart’s view and illustrated his position by the metaphor in which desire represented a path to the divine blessedness.

Ellen Anthony-Moore (eanthony1@mmm.edu)

Corneille on the Dublin stage: recycling, reframing, and the celebrity actress

I aim to explore the complex dynamic between the celebrity actress and popular trends in play adaptation on the mid-seventeenth century stage. Much has been written about the influence of politics, contemporary taste, or literary theory on playwrights of the period who seek to adapt ancient stories for the stage. However, the concern of this paper is how playwrights were influenced by the inclusion of the female performer. How did the act of “seeing” women on the stage influence dramaturgical trends, especially the reinterpretation of classical texts, at the end of the Renaissance when women were finally permitted to perform?

When actresses were eventually allowed to perform in English speaking theatres, they became public personalities in an unprecedented way. Instead of the anonymous individuals whose names almost never appeared on playbills, performers at the end of early modern period emerged as personalities, as objects of public curiosity and inquiry. This is a power that playwrights could not ignore and plays with strong women at the center became more popular than ever. But exactly how did the power of the celebrity actress affect the way in which ancient works were revised and rewritten?

When this French tradition arrived in Ireland, the natural assumption would be that it brought with it a more complex dialogue about sex, power and politics. But did the stage actually become a place for women to assert control over the cultural narrative regarding gender or did the commodification of the actress merely reinforce misogynistic norms? Could a woman could remained ‘unsullied’ even while playing on the stage “where all eyes are upon her”? I aim to look more closely at the successful production of Katherine Phillips translation of Corneille’s Pompey, which was first performed in Dublin in 1662, as a way of exploring the role of women and the performance of classical texts on the early modern stage.

Maria Athanasekou (m_k_athanasekou@yahoo.com)

Sight as communicated in the religious iconography of the Renaissance

The senses are the first to know, the first to detect whatever a person is exposed to. We first feel and then think. We first enter a reality through our senses and then do we furnish a rational structure or meaning for it. Images create rather than merely represent reality. This insight is the cornerstone of how people sense the world around them through images. The painted surface becomes a kind of a theatrical ‘re-presentation’ manipulating objects or the very expression of emotion to establish a specific atmosphere or mood and elicit sensory

impact from the viewer. It creates an all immersive environment through the depiction of lighting, set, clothing, as well as the suggestion of the senses of smell or hearing, touch, taste, through, even, the implication of temperature and texture.

In '*Della pittura*', Leon Battista Alberti wrote: 'No one would deny that the painter has nothing to do with things that are not visible. The painter is concerned solely with representing what can be seen'. What Alberti does not mention is that during the Trecento, as well as in his own time, painted surfaces were populated with *things* that are not visible, with saints and angels, seraphims and cherubims, even the Madonna, Jesus and the Almighty God. In the religious iconography of the Renaissance, not only is the heavenly sphere depicted but also a specific sensory impact is produced by the objects represented as well as by the scenography of the pictures.

A work of art is a microcosm of multiple meanings and psychological nuances. Focusing on several case studies, this paper will examine how the sensory impact of sight is communicated and emerged through the microclimate of each piece.

Barbara Auger (drbarbarauger@gmail.com)

Medieval ships looking at things

Following a study of figureheads pictured in medieval European sources (from 700 to 1300 AD), this paper aims to address one specific aspect of these ships' heads: what are they looking at? In the earlier study (2013), Auger argued that the depiction of these figureheads was part of a Christian rhetoric encoded into the image, revealing the various stages of God's will, therefore illustrating the Incarnation mystery. Looking closer into the picture, the ship's eyes and visual ability raises deeper questions to the said rhetoric. How is the ship's interaction with other iconographical elements depicted? Is the object in sight actually visible? What is the nature of said objet? And how is it relevant to the rhetoric?

Following a typological review of the figureheads and their rhetorical meaning, the paper will discuss the role of the ship's visual sense, and how it connects with other elements inside and outside the picture, giving to the sense of sight a divine force. The images presented include miniatures from sixteen different manuscript sources including Carolingian, Ottonian, Anglo-Saxon, as well as from the Bayeux Tapestry.

Alexander Baldassano (abaldassano@gradcenter.cuny.edu)

Often amongst the Human Race: visualizing gender in the *Liber monstrorum*

The seventh- or eighth-century Anglo-Latin *Liber monstrorum de diuersis generibus* claims that the time of the monsters is over; whereas they once roamed the earth, only rumors and lies now keep them vivified. Tasked with responding to which rumored monsters are real and which imaginary, the speaker finds himself cast down into stormy waters of rumor, 'quivering amongst the monsters of the deep', where he must crawl back to safe land and rationally discern monstrous fiction from mundane fact.

Yet this rhetoric of rational discernment fails in the very first example of a rumored monster, which bears visual witness to a 'man [or person] of both [or either] sex' living and working rather unremarkably alongside other humans. The ensuing description of the person's body wavers between masculine and feminine and charges the person with sexual deception, but ultimately concludes, 'this is said to have happened often amongst the human race'. In opening with such a person, the text proposes the importance of visual discernment for constructing normative sex and gender, but implicitly registers the limitations and biases of such a gaze; unable to resolve questions of gendered ambiguity using vision, the author moves on to the next example.

As the remainder of the *Liber* lists increasingly fictitious individuals and races, it stays concerned with discounting the legitimacy of bodies outside of normative human anatomy. We are not to believe the 'gilded speech of marvelous report' that accounts for monstrous

rumors, but instead must bear visual witness. This paper thus argues that in light of its initial admission of the persistence of nonnormative genders and the failure of visual witness to reify gendered categories, the *Liber* implicitly questions the reliability of sensory authority in establishing the normative human body.

Martha Baldon, Cardiff University (baldonmc@cardiff.ac.uk)

Sight, knowledge, and perception: the depiction of hermeneutic progression in the Vulgate Cycle *Queste del Saint Graal* and Thomas Malory's *Tale of the Sankgreal*

Writing on non-physical perception in the late fifth Century Pseudo-Dionysius saw 'the field of spiritual perception' as a 'graded continuum', where 'one's cognitive capacities are stretched and transformed as one draws closer and closer to God'. In the Vulgate *Queste del Saint Graal* and Malory's *Tale of the Sankgreal* the process of achieving the Grail is similarly depicted as a series of visual experiences. These visions increase in clarity and complexity as the knights improve their religious understanding and subsequently get closer to achieving the Grail.

The relationship between physical sight and spiritual understanding results in the creation of a new form of 'spiritual sight' through which the knights learn to close their 'worldly yen' to the Arthurian world, and interpret their physical settings through an understanding of the Christian doctrine. A growing interest in forms of vision which combine physical sight with divine experience in medieval Europe can be seen in the development of a vocabulary concerned with describing 'spiritual sight', which appeared between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries in response to continued Eucharistic controversy. At the same time, the visual experiences that the knights encounter reflect the predominant theory of sight understood at the point at which each text was written.

While important work on the significance of sight to Medieval Arthurian narratives has been completed by Sarah Stanbury (1991) (2008) and Molly Martin (2010), the unique conceptualisations of sight portrayed in the *Queste* and the *Sankgreal*, important to an interpretation of the Grail miracles, are worthy of further scholarly attention. This paper will argue that changes in contemporary theories of sight are reflected in the models of spiritual sight described in the *Queste* and the *Sankgreal*. Furthermore, it is only through understanding the significance of this 'spiritual sight' that the miracles of the grail can be fully comprehended.

Marie Charbonnel (marie-charbonnel@hotmail.fr)

Visual effects, visuals affect: the role of monumental images in emotional conditioning for the eucharistic celebration (13th-15th century)

During the middle ages, the action of painting is argued by numerous intentions. The most important is to give materiality to faith and sustain it by visual experiences of perception. In this context, monumental images are part of a sensorial matrix that links believers and God in sacred space and leads to transcendence. Some visual effects reinforce the efficiency of those monumental images as they constitute a sensual link between two worlds. Those effects can lie in the location of the images into the sacred space, notably for the apse, in the integration of liturgical settings (as chalice or tabernacle) on both sides of the *Majestas Domini*, or in the emphasis of similarities between throne and altar. The intention to grant the spect-actor sensual and visual experience affects the aesthetic and iconographical choices in the representation of God in sacred space. The vision of the Crucifixion at the entrance of the sanctuary, followed by the *Majestas Domini* plunges the celebrant in the celebrated temporality, integrates him into *historia sacra* thanks to visual paths within sacred spaces, and gives substance and presence to celebrated God. By visual evocations of the Virgin, the apostles and/or saints, monumental images also place the priest in his role of intercessor. Those aspects of a sensorial approach and visual perception of monumental images will be

discussed on the base of textual sources and examples of monumental representations of the *Majestas Domini* and related iconographical subjects.

Thomas Devaney (thomas.devaney@helsinki.fi)

Seeing the Virgin: emotions and visual perception on pilgrimage

In the course of his lengthy discussion of the emotional impact of the annual *romería* (or pilgrimage) to the shrine of Nuestra Señora de la Cabeza in the mountains near the city of Andújar, Spain, Manuel Salcedo Olid described a dramatic transformation in visual perception. At the moment the effigy of the Virgin appeared in public, the crowd, which had been engaged in a variety of amusements, froze in place. Everyone stopped to look. According to Olid, the moment was so intense because they didn't see an effigy at all, but Mary herself. The statue, he wrote, acted as a 'clear window' or a 'simple mirror' through which 'truly it seems to us as if God Our Father, in honor of the glory of his Holy Mother, has shown us some special, internal vision that is not describable'. And so Olid and others could 'almost persuade ourselves that we see the Sacred Person of the Queen of the Angels herself, from head to toe, with no change at all to the perfection of her admirable face'. Olid presented all this as a miracle, in which God had directed worshippers' eyes to the place 'where the heart always looks'. Although some scholars have dismissed his account as an attempt to attract pilgrims, aspects of his portrayal are confirmed by a range of sources from various perspectives (including miracle books, devotional guides, travelogues, poetry, plays, synodal decrees, and iconography), indicating that his words should be taken seriously as a representation of the pilgrims' experience. This paper aims both to contextualize Olid's text within the broader purview of pilgrimage and miracle stories involving sight and to use his perspective to rethink our understanding of late-medieval and Renaissance ideas about the relationship of emotion to vision and 'visions'.

Rocco Di Dio (R.di-Dio@warwick.ac.uk)

From *Visus* to *Voluptas*. Marsilio Ficino and his treatment of the platonic theme of light: a case study.

The aim of this paper is to explore the conference topic through the contextualised analysis of a set of Plotinian texts that Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) collected in one of his extant working notebooks and arguably used as a textual basis for his Commentary on Plato's *Symposium* (1470). These hitherto unpublished passages from Ficino's manuscript provide evidence of the first elaboration of images and arguments that are more extensively developed in his commentary and play an important role within his philosophical system. Among these images, there is a key concept expounded in Ficino's thought, the close relation between *pulchritudo* and *voluptas*: the pleasure generated by the visual experience of beauty in the physical world induces one to turn towards divine beauty and to unite with God. Scholarship pointed out the relevance of the tight connection between the light and the universal *voluptas* in Ficino's philosophy, sight (*visus*) being 'l'instrument privilégié par lequel nous accédons à la réalité métaphysique de la beauté' (Chastel 1952).

By analysing these selected texts, I shall discuss Ficino's treatment of Plotinus, investigating specific facets of his reading practices. The study of this aspect of Ficino's work aims to shed light on his methodology as well as on his philosophical outlook. More specifically, the analysis of Ficino's manuscript intends to provide further insight into the study of the genesis of his *Commentarium*.

Anna Dow (a.e.dow@durham.ac.uk)

Medieval manuscript illustration and the art of drawing the eye

In Paris, among other centres of manuscript illumination, commercial illustrations followed a standard of high quality and repeated forms; the rich illuminations are pre-planned and as concise in their details as possible. In other manuscripts that lie outside this tradition, however, illuminations are not as polished but more spontaneous and engaging for that fact, and these can tell us a thing or two about how medieval illustration was able to draw the eye of the reader in a number of diverse ways. Some, such as the illuminations of Lydgate's 'Troy Book' in John Rylands MS 1, depict intricate narrative details that are squeezed into the margins. Others, such as the illuminations of Langland's *Piers Plowman* in Bodley MS Douce 104 and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* in Huntington MS EL 26 C 9, similarly use the margins but in a less conventional way, one that forces the reader to engage with the text on a more immediate and intellectual level. We find similar instances of visual impact in devotional manuscripts, in the well-documented nonsensical marginalia of some Books of Hours or the text blocks or corrections that create their own visual stamp on the mise en page. But it is in the secular romance manuscripts in particular that we find real engagement between the creators of the manuscript and its recipient, and it is in these manuscripts that we find original narrative details in the visual composition of the mise en page. Such manuscripts demonstrate the art of drawing the eye in particular directions to gauge as much narrative information as possible, using the disorder and open space of the margins to demonstrate the art of narrative illustration.

Monika Eisenhauer (monikaeisenhauer@freenet.de)

Apocalypticism in church frescos of medieval Westphalia: how liturgy transfers a construct of ideas by using the senses

In the German region of Westphalia is the little village of Berghausen with an old church that possesses frescos of the thirteenth century. The Romanesque painting in the apse depicts the judging Christ Pantocrator within the mandorla, with scenes of the Old and the New Testament arranged beneath his throne. The centre of the presentation is formed by a small window with a little opening that provides the dark interior space of the church with bright light. There are more scenes in the bulge of the small window: we find both Mary with the Archangel Gabriel and the baptism of Jesus performed by John the Baptist. The whole painting presents an apocalyptic scene.

The message: This apocalyptic scene describes the second Parousia of Christ and the Last Judgment, embedded in the narration of the history of the whole church. What we get by using iconography and iconology is the presentation of a theological construct of ideas and furthermore a philosophy: That means we have an interpretation of the particular things within their context that separates them from their ambiguousness.

The involvement of the senses: We are confronted with the main ideas of a theological construct of ideas: How is this construct transferred to the people in the mass? Do they get the message through the primary sense of the sight? Within the analysis we will see how the transportation is not a product of coincidence but the result of an intended exchange between sender and recipient, using symbols to connect the visual sight with other senses. The visual sight is the origin, but within a liturgy that involves the believers in the process of the mass the visual perception activates more senses by employing symbols of them.

Richard A. Etlin (retlin@umd.edu)

Watching Metamorphoses: Performative Architecture at the Château d'Anet (c. 1547–1555)

Diane de Poitiers's shared residence with Henri II, the Château d'Anet, was not merely a home. Rather it was an example of performative architecture where residents and visitors encountered scenes of metamorphosis achieved architecturally through the manipulation of perspectival illusions that took place as one moved through space. The architect, Philibert De l'Orme, had already experimented with a visually dynamic approach to architecture, using three-dimensional anamorphosis, which he allied with enactments of medieval literary texts, such as *Le Roman de la Rose*, *Tristan*, and *Le Chevalier au Lion*, at the Hôtel Bullioud (Lyon, 1536). These chivalric romances belonged to a genre favored by François I, for whom, I believe, this earlier performative architecture had been envisaged. At the Château Anet, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Dante *Commedia*, and the contemporary chivalric romance *Amadis de Gaule* were the primary references. De l'Orme's own work developed further an illusionistic approach to architecture that had been pioneered at François I's Château de Chambord in a manner much appreciated by nineteenth-century critics but now forgotten by modern scholars. Furthermore, the multi-sensory experience of architecture at Giulio Romano's Palazzo de Te (Mantua, 1525-1532), which combined dynamically changing visual scenes with heat, noise, kinesthetically unstable surfaces, and illusions of flickering flames caused by sunlight reflected off water, probably furnished an important precedent for De l'Orme's own inventive ventures into the visualization of a world of dreams, a journey into a veritable *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, altered thematically at the Château d'Anet to suit the needs of the patrons, principally Diane de Poitiers and, secondarily, Henri II.

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Instruments of scrutiny and Jacques Callot's hidden meanings

Although Walter Scott disagrees with E.T.A. Hoffmann on the consequence of Callot's creativity in the realm of fantasy, both implicitly agree that viewing Jacques Callot's prints demand meticulous scrutiny in order to comprehend the details embedded in his work. I draw upon the nineteenth-century Romantics here to demonstrate how viewing Callot's Baroque prints have continually evoked strong feelings both in the way they should be viewed and how effectively they stimulated the imagination.

This paper is part of a larger book project entitled *In the Manner of Jacques Callot: Idioms of Theatre, Art and Literature*, currently in progress. It examines how Jacques Callot's early seventeenth-century prints engage with what Ofer Gal and Raz Chen Morris call the 'optical paradox at its core', a Baroque effect that created a new way of negotiating the gaze in print culture. Devices scale and repetition demanding that the viewer engage with the landscapes and figures rendered so small that only close scrutiny will gratify the experience. This style intersects with the creation of his own original works dating between 1616 and 1622. These include the compounded effect of viewing with instruments of seeing operating with the device of repoussoir so that figures not only point at an inside plane, but also look in through telescopes. In other examples, we can also find spectacles on faces, over masks, and even on the asses of devils in order to parody spectacles as signifiers of knowledge and vision. With each example, Callot draws our attention to the artifice of the scene and the pleasure of looking at his microscopic views.

Daniel Heider (Daniel.Heider@seznam.cz)

Suárez on vision

In my paper I focus on the specific core of Suárez's visual theory, as presented in the first five questions of the seventh disputation *De sensibus exterioribus in particulari* and in the fifth disputation *De potentiis cognoscitivis in communi* of his *De anima*. My main object is to reconstruct Suárez's teaching about visual perception from bottom up, namely from the objects up to the perceptual act. I will proceed in six steps. First, I present Suárez's theory of light (*lumen*), according to which light is a natural (physical) quality inhering in a translucent subject such as the air. Second, I lay out the Jesuit's doctrine of colour as a real (permanent) quality inherent to material substances. Third, I bring to attention Suárez's theory of the adequate, total object of visual perception, which is light and everything manifested by light. Fourth, in the context of the naturalistic concept of light I bring in Suárez's ontology of the sensible (impressed) species both in *medio* and in the sense organ. Fifth, I treat Suárez's critique of the theory of extramission, according to which visual perception runs by means of emission of the visual spirits or the intraocular light from the eyes toward the visible objects. Sixth, I briefly present Suárez's physiology of the eye in the context of the psychological issue why having two eyes does not result in having two visions or the vision of a double object. All the doctrines shall be exposed in the background of the broad spectrum of doctrines represented by the foremost representatives of the ancient and medieval philosophy including Plato, Aristotle, Galen, Aquinas and *perspectivi*.

Shazia Jagot (jagot@sdu.dk)

'Of quentye mirours and of perspectives': Arabic scientific perspectives and medieval literary iconography

Chaucer's brief depiction of mirrors and perspectives in the Squire's Tale, preceded by a list of the optical *auctores* 'They speken of Alocen, and Vitulon, / And Aristotle' (ll. 232–33), has led to scholarly inquiries into Chaucer's use of optics in light of his depiction of love and its relationship to knowledge, metaphysics and spatial imagery. The explicit citation of 'Alocen', the foremost Arabic authority on mathematical optical theory in the Latin West, Abū 'Alī al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Haytham, known in Latin as Alhazen, alongside the Silesian Dominican scholar, Erasmus Witelo and Aristotle demonstrates sound knowledge of the triumvirate of *perspectiva*. Alhazen's *Kitāb al-Manāzīr* ('Book of Optics'), translated into Latin as *De aspectibus* ('On Perspective'), influenced profoundly Witelo, who based much of his work on optics on Alhazen's *De aspectibus*, in addition to the Aristotelian corpus. Little scholarly attention has been paid to the figure of 'Alocen' in relation to Chaucer's use of *perspectiva* and late medieval literary depictions of the gaze, specifically in light of the scientific, cultural and religious milieu that informed his writing, which is the focus of this paper. Whilst Alhazen transformed ideas on *perspectiva*, providing it with a sound mathematical basis, he is also responsible for 'the transformation from a *scientific theory* into an *artistic practice*, from an Arab *visual theory* into a Western pictorial theory', as examined recently by Hans Belting (*From Florence to Baghdad*, pp. 26-27). Taking this into account and Belting's theoretical framework, *Blickwechsel* ('an exchange of glances'), this paper will explore the act of seeing and *perspectiva* in both art and reality in Alhazen's *De aspectibus* and its influence on medieval literary iconography of sight and the gaze in the *Canterbury Tales*, *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Roman de la Rose*. It aims to demonstrate that Arabic optical texts allied to Islamic ideas on visual representation can provide us with vital insights into the literary depiction of sight and the gaze.

Agnes Karpinski (agnes.karpinski@uni-saarland.de)

Physiology of dreaming and perception of the Divine: two medieval commentaries on Aristotle's *De somno et vigilia*

According to medieval theories on human cognition, the imagination (*imaginatio*) plays an important role in the cognitive process, because it enables human beings to understand and comprehend single phenomena of the external sensible world. The *imaginatio* is a virtue, located in the brain, where it receives sensory information from the exterior senses, so that the sensory data can be transmuted into mental images (*phantasmata*). Apparently the *imaginatio* serves as a necessary and basic condition for the acquisition of knowledge. The *phantasmata* are not only the medium between sense objects and higher cognitive powers, but also responsible for dream experiences during sleep when digestion takes place and the inner senses are not able to receive exterior sense data.

Although *phantasmata* were considered as a preliminary necessity in the cognition process, it is in fact not possible for any human intellect to obtain knowledge without referring to *phantasmata*, except through divine grace. Aristotle's strict physiological explanation of the phenomenon included a complete negation of divinatory dreams, which he considered as nothing more but byproducts of the sense perception with no deeper meaning at all. This fact might have been challenging for medieval commentators, who could choose between two options. They could leave a closer discussion to theologians or they could try to give natural explanations with the support of methodological approaches from the philosophical area of epistemology, combined with the physiology of the body. Two medieval commentaries on *De somno et vigilia* will be in the focus of investigation: John of Jandun's (†1328) *Quaestio 24* on natural prophecy and Adam of Buckfield's (†between 1278–1294) commentary on *De divinatione per somnum* which was falsely attributed to Thomas Aquinas.

Sophie Kelly (s.e.kelly@kent.ac.uk)

Seeing is believing: visions of the Trinity in *BnF MS Fr. 13342* and the late medieval illuminated book

Images of the Trinity in late thirteenth- and fourteenth-century luxury illuminated books made for elite lay audiences offered readers a chance to 'see' God in new and unique ways. The profusion of Trinitarian images in illuminated manuscripts made and owned by members of the lay elite, from Psalters and Books of Hours, to Apocalypse manuscripts, Romances and texts on mysticism, reflects the desire of this audience to see and experience the Trinitarian God in visual form through the medium of the book. This paper considers the ways in which visual representations of the Trinity encountered by elite lay readers through the format of the illuminated manuscript informed the way in which they viewed, saw and understood the three-in-one God. Focusing on a series of illuminations from a book on the mass made in England in the fourteenth century for lay readers (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS *fr.* 13342), in which the depiction of the performance of the mass culminates in a vision of the Trinity by a kneeling group of lay devotees (f. 48v), this paper will explore the ways in which ideas of sight and visual perception were employed in both the visual and textual programme of the mass book in order to inform and enrich the reader-viewers belief in, and understanding of, the Trinitarian mysteries of God. An examination in particular of the lay devotees vision of the Trinity on f. 48v in relation to medieval theories of vision and visual perception, as well as other contemporary images of divine visions of the Trinity, will demonstrate how visual depictions of the process of 'seeing' the divine can inform our wider understanding of medieval ideas of vision.

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Seeing as proof: Richard of Saint Victor's drawings of Ezekiel's architectural vision

There is little discussion of architectural drawings from before the thirteenth century because of the perception that they are merely 'representational' and lack sophistication. However, Richard of Saint Victor's (d. 1172) drawings for his literal commentary on the Book of Ezekiel contains over a dozen architectural drawings, which have been rarely discussed against their wider intellectual background. My paper will argue that Richard exploits recent lexical and conceptual developments in twelfth-century geometry to create a highly sophisticated set of drawings, and that he does so to allow the reader to see the drawings, thus providing a sense of proof to his textual argument.

The prophet Ezekiel describes seeing the Temple of the Israelites remade on top of a mountain. In his commentary, Richard differentiates between two types of measurements, those taken *in planum*, and those taken *superficies*. These different types relate to measurements taken as if the site of the building was flat and those measurements which take the slope of the mountain into account, respectively. The change in site affects the measurements and Richard attempts to take these variations into account. Richard provides geometric figures as 'proof' of his recreation, allowing the medieval reader to recreate his argument in front of their own eyes. I will outline how Richard does this, and I will conclude that Richard uses images as a form of validation. The twelfth-century renaissance provided a revolution in how humans viewed the physical properties of the universe, Richard articulates those innovations to relate the truth of history to the medieval eye and the act of seeing.

Fabien Lacouture (fabien.lacouture@gmail.com)

Children as sighted persons in Italian renaissance painting

'See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven'. (Matthew, 18, 10)
Since the Antiquity, the child has concentrated a lot of superstitions. For numerous authors, like Pliny the elder or Apuleius, it plays a very important role since it is the one who sees what the adult cannot, the one who warns relatives of what is really happening, its purity and virginity allowing the child to be in contact with other worlds. The Gospel of Matthew, among others, also expresses the child's ability to see beyond the traditional sense of sight. This idea is taken up during the Renaissance and is abandoned by the Counter-Reformation, which forbade this belief for being too close to superstition. But before that, from the XIVth century, it became a *topos* in the Italian renaissance painting, especially in scenes picturing religious episodes.

There are numerous pictures where children are painted as the main vehicles of God's word and will, and as the only witnesses of miracles. They are represented as sighted persons, compared to their older relatives who, in front of God's work, remain blind. Children embody the idea of a 'second sight'. But furthermore, 'through their eyes', the painters can also show the spectators what is at stake in the picture. Children see when and what the others cannot, but they also enable spectators to see in their's turn. This is why, in this paper, through texts and Italian renaissance paintings, I will analyse how painters represented the children's ability to see and how they used children as a pictorial way to point out to spectators what to see in the pictures.

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Perceptive mind's-eyes on romanesque sculpted capitals through gestalt and semiotic shapes

Romanesque art was to make the church 'speak', thus visual spaces are needed for iconography. Accordingly, frontal figures are the most powerful in hierarchy, but on sculpted

capitals of the Nativity (Sant Pere de Rodes, Sant Cugat del Valles) and the Magi (Tarragona, St. Etienne), fore figures and rear buildings are integrated, losing the hierarchical order. Moreover, on the tympanum of Saint Denis, Paris, a big frontal shape of a building pushes many figures back. A question arises: how are human perceptions on Romanesque iconographic capitals, which lead to interpretation and communication?

I propose the gestalt theory in shapes as methodology, despite there being no term 'gestalt' in medieval times. Shape is the outline of a plane figure, endowing recognition, identification, and categorization for specific figures and forms, related to human perception. The perception of shape depends on the level of visual contrast between the outline which separates a figure from its ground. Positive-negative shapes and their interrelationships are a principal composition. The positive are the subject matter itself; the negative are the areas surrounding the positive. The negative is not always of equal interest with the positive, but provides an illusive, powerful depth. Moreover, the human mind adapts the image to the simplest and most regular shapes to understand it. Being a kind of thing, shape is emotional with a potent impact. Thiel (1981) suggests four laws for establishing a visual field: Proximity, Similarity, Continuance, and Closure.

My paper investigates Romanesque sculpted capitals in different areas, by applying the Gestalt and semiotic methods; (1) How could medieval believers' minds-eyes perceive these hierarchical shapes? (2) How does the relationship between shapes affect them as independent entities or in group? The result may suggest that the believers' perceptive experiences, interpretation and communication would be unanimous or flexible in contemplation with God and daily work for God.

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St Brigit's eyes and spiritual perception in the *Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*

Perhaps the most renowned of St Brigit's miracles is her sacrifice of an eye to avoid marriage, only for it to reappear unharmed. It is preserved in the anonymous eighth-century *Vita Prima* and the vernacular *Bethu Brigitte*, which may have acted as source material for part of the former. While the *Bethu Brigitte* supplies us with a greater level of narrative detail, the miracle's spiritual significance is only explained in the *Vita Prima* where Brigit is frequently presented in a state of contemplation. As the Life explains, her willingness to sacrifice the eye of her body preserved the eye of her soul, and so the ecstatic revelations granted by that 'second sight'.

This ability is not unusual for an Irish saint. Monastic and Gregorian ideals placed great value on the contemplative life, and their influence on early Irish ecclesiastical thought helped shape its hagiographical models. What makes Brigit's presentation significant is that the figure or tradition behind the *Vita Prima* incorporated the theological rationale of *contemplatio* into its hagiographical narrative to an extent that her other Lives do not. Thus, it imbues Brigit with a remarkably strong spiritual sight that enhances her saintly authority, and weaves one aspect of her sanctity along a specific monastic line.

This paper will explore the exegetical and literary background to Brigit's sacrifice and her second sight in the *Vita Prima*. It will consider the relationship of these themes to Brigit's overall depiction as a female patron saint, as well as a possible continental source for the Life's concern to present her spiritual authority in this manner. This will help to elucidate an important strand in her cultic literature, and aspects of female sanctity in the early medieval period.

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A microhistorical glimpse at an early seventeenth century Irish Capuchin eye

This paper will look at the role of sight and visual perception in two related chronicles written by Nicholas Archbold OFM Cap in the 1630s and 1640s. Archbold gives several accounts of demonic possession and operation of the evil eye in heavily confessional terms in a bid to link ‘heresy’ with his apocalyptic sensibility. His writings offer an insight into the enduring currency of medieval optical theories in the early modern period as well as providing would-be exorcists with advice on appropriate ‘custody of the eyes’ during struggles with the adversary.

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The Human and sight in Cusanus’ philosophy: religious and philosophic meaning

Many historians note that the Renaissance had been the period when the importance of sight increased. Effectively, since this period, the system of thought had prompted with a former vision of a limited and human condition. Human recognized the importance of both sense and intellect and allowed seeing as a stimulate of knowledge.

Nicolas Cusanus as one of the famous philosophers of Renaissance, made a well-articulated treaties of divine and human sight. His way of thinking evoked theology not only as a spiritual practise but as an authentic contemplative and intellectual moment. What Cusanus explains in his ‘The vision of God’ is seen as the summit of a spiritual experience that human soul can achieve by contemplation. To what does Cusanus theory of human and divine sight refer?

Behind the Cusanus ideas of seeing God, is the Plato’s philosophic speculation which aimed to prompt within the senses and hearers to distinct between finite and infinite world. According to Cusanus, “coincidence of opposite “ is suitable to evocate the paradox of seeing and not seeing, of knowing and not knowing. Cusanus admit recognition of God as the most important exegesis to exist as a human being. Faith involving is not a mere hearing of the revelation, but it’s a process through which intellect must return to the Christ to be what he was, Human is included in to be born again. Furthermore, faith is a means by which Human access all the truth. It’s compared to an eye who brings humanity to peace, rest and eternal meeting of God.

By his theory of seing, what had Cusanus mentioned? God or human? Theology or philosophy?

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‘How she was seen’: Lutgard of Aywières as Devotional Object

Early in his thirteenth-century *Life of Lutgard of Aywieres*, Thomas of Cantimpré recounts the levitation of Lutgard as she chants in the choir. Beginning with the title “How she was seen suspended in the air by the whole community,” Thomas describes the occurrence as a miracle given to those who beheld it. The function of this miracle at first seems apparent—it provides eyewitnesses who can confirm Lutgard’s divine favor. But this account does more than authenticate Lutgard. In this moment of levitation, Lutgard becomes the object of devotional gaze. Like a stained glass window or an altarpiece, she represents and encourages reflection on the presence and power of God.

This paper offers a case study of the *Life of Lutgard*, which is peppered with accounts like that above of people experiencing revelations through looking at the holy woman, in order to consider how a holy person becomes the object rather than subject of sight. While I draw on medieval theories of vision and light metaphysics, in this paper I am mostly concerned with gaze theory and ‘devotional gaze’ — the idea one could be spiritually trained through sight. Devotional gaze theory has been largely applied to the use of visual objects and images such

as crucifixes and Veronicas to experience the divine. However, I suggest members of religious communities also cast their devotional gaze on holy persons, fashioning them into spiritual objects. Considering parallels between actual devotional images and holy women is helpful in thinking about the similar ways objects and visionaries benefitted their communities. When gazed on by others, holy persons such as Lutgard encouraged others in their meditations on the divine and in the cultivation of their own visionary experiences.

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Whorish eyes: distorted sight and envy in Dante's *Commedia*

The paper will address how Dante configures poetically the notion of Envy (both personal and political) in *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*. Dante offers a radical vision of distorted vision and links it directly to corrupt political and social practices. As his text is a corrective one, he articulates how this comes about and how mankind must literally refocus the gaze onto the proper objects of contemplation. His reading, however, will be shown to be a radical departure from earlier articulations.

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Spies and spotters of the mind: imagination in Shakespearean tragedy

Shakespeare's engagement with the works of popular medical treatise writers of the early modern period (like Timothie Bright, Thomas Wright, Andrew Boorde, Andreas Laurentius) has been well documented and discussed. Most often he is seen as engaging this material in relation to melancholy and, more recently, the passions. But these influential medical sources also have much to say about the 'the mind's eye' (Hamlet, 1.2.191), or imagination. In Shakespeare it is '[p]roper to madmen' (2HIV, 1.3.30), causes Hamlet to 'wax[] desperate' (1.4.99) and Lear "by wrong imagination [to] lose / The knowledge of [himself]" (4.6.299). But imagination is also an essential catalyst in the relationship between a poet / playwright and his audience in dramatizing and / or visualizing the story that he is telling.

Desdemona hints at the power of tragedy when she asserts that, having heard his piteous tale, she 'saw Othello's visage in his mind' (*Othello*, 1.3.274). The suggestion that we might see with someone else's mind (even more odd than the idea of seeing with 'the eye of childhood' (*Macbeth*, 2.2.54)) is tantalising. This paper, then, returns to the popular medical theorists of the period (particularly works like Laurentius' *Discourse of the Preservation of Sight* (1599)) in order better to understand how we should see and read the tragedy of the age.

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Through the looking glass and what the lovers found there: the liminality of reflective surfaces and the visual perception of space in the *Roman de la Rose* and in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.

In the *Roman de la Rose* and in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, the two male protagonists, Amant and Poliphilo respectively, narrate their dream experiences, in which they undergo a process of initiation in the art and the mysteries of love preparing them for their union with their objects of desire. The dream frame of these first-person narratives has several implications on the use and function of space therein. Dream spaces can be designed to be as fluid and mutable as the dreamers' minds. Their *ekphrastic* descriptions express the subjective experience of an ever-changing and ever-expanding liminal space, which is intricately connected with the psychological state of the dreamers-narrators, a state which, just as the dream spaces, is constructed by the author. As a case study on this issue, this paper will focus on the use of mirrors and of other reflective surfaces in the two texts, examining their liminality and its significance in the narrative and spatial structure of the dreams.

Particular emphasis will be given on two crucial moments of the dreamers' initiatory dream journeys, namely, Amant's encounter with the fountain of Narcissus and Poliphilo's exploration of the triumphal portal in the ruined city, discussing the disruptive effects of self-reflection, as well as the illusory and transformative effects of such reflective surfaces on the dreamers' visual, or rather mental, perception of the dream space.

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Sight, visual perception and disimagination in the early Netherlandish pictorial tradition (15th century)

The theme of the sight will be studied according to two major axes: the dynamic progression of the various types of vision (active, internal and contemplative) and the phenomenon of disimagination. First we will focus on the varieties of status of sight in the image of the representation of the three shepherds in the *Triptych Portinari* by Hugo van der Goes. In connection to *The Spiritual Espousals (Die geestelike brulocht)*, we shall analyze the evolution of the vision of the shepherds according to three phases described by the mystic Ruysbroeck the Admirable: *dat werkend leven* (the active life), *het begeerlijcke leven* (the life of the desire of God) and *het Godschouwend leven* (the life in which we see God or the contemplative life). Each phase corresponds to a different way of 'seeing'. These consecutive phases do not remain separated and are linked in their process. So the natural vision and the supernatural vision remain inextricably connected. Then, we shall study a representation of the evolution of the natural sight towards the contemplative sight in different devotional portraits: *The Virgin of Chancellor Rolin* and *The Madonna with Canon van der Paele* by Jan van Eyck and *Ecce Agnus Dei* by Dieric Bouts. Finally, based on an analysis of the treaty of Geert Grote, the *Tractatus of quartet generibus meditationum sive contemplationum*, we will highlight the phenomenon of the disimagination.

Through the study of two very meaningful representations, the *Diptych of Maarten Nieuwenhove* by Hans Memling and the *Diptych of Christiaan de Hondt* by the Master of 1499, we will show that the artists knew how to stage a gradual and effective disappearance of the image (in particular with the use of color) to lead the faithful to the invisible.

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Sight as spiritual labour in *The Pilgrimage of the Lyfe of the Manhode*

Scholars of the early fifteenth century *The Pilgrimage of the Lyfe of the Manhode*, the anonymous Middle English translation of Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* (1331), have commented extensively on the complex processes of attaining understanding in an array of different modes presented in this work. However, they have failed to acknowledge the fact that although the narrative overtly values a model of spiritual progress heavily saturated in Neo-Platonic thought, continually vilifying the body and negating access to higher truths via mundane channels, its powerful and strategic appeals to the senses require the involvement of the reader's sensory faculties in the process of deriving meaning. The text thus expects the readers to decode that sensory intimations belong to the spectre of reception leading to understanding, even though they may constitute merely the lowest heuristic method of human phenomenology.

Throughout *The Pilgrimage*, the sense of sight plays a pivotal role as a medium of reception and understanding. It yields physical details that require ruminative interpretation and judgement based on intuition and experience, activating a game of speculation and providing a commentary on the spiritual benefit of physicality and the material world as semantic vehicles. However, the framework for the majority of the text is, we learn, a dream vision. The narrative and the insight gained are therefore crucially situated at the crossroads between reality and imagination — oneiric access to higher truths thus scrutinises the medium of instruction, and questions the reliability of the sense of sight and the information it yields.

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I stumbled when I saw: renaissance unreliability of the visual

In Shakespeare's *King John*, Arthur, Duke of Brittain, describes sight as 'that precious sense' (4.1.93). When faced with the prospect of the loss of his eyes at the hands of Hubert, Arthur pleads: 'Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue, / So I may keep mine eyes, O, spare mine eyes' (4.2.100–01). It is, however, Arthur's tongue which saves his eyes. Not by taking their place on the block, but by eloquently dissuading Hubert from his sworn course of action and stirring him to pity and mercy. Throughout Shakespeare's plays sight is portrayed as the primary sense, but it is also shown to be a sense which should not be wholly trusted; in Shakespeare the eye is often trumped, beguiled or dissuaded by the tongue. In *Othello*, Shakespeare illustrates the pitfalls of a reliance on visual evidence and the ease in which those for whom seeing is believing can be manipulated. *Othello* highlights the point that visual data can be as ambiguous as text and that when improper glossing or interpretation is applied what we see can be easily misread.

Shakespeare's Iago is a master manipulator, but he is by no means unique as a literary figure. The pattern which the narrative of *Othello* follows, of the male lover becoming convinced of his love's inconstancy by the visual evidence of physical tokens, is a familiar one in late-medieval and renaissance literature. The ninth tale of day two of Boccaccio's *Decameron* holds many parallels with the narrative of *Othello*. The ease with which, in both texts, the husband figure can be beguiled by spurious visual evidence, presented in even the most remotely plausible way, is indicative of a larger male anxiety surrounding the pre-modern ideal image of the constant and sexually passive female.

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A plant's temperament

The significant role of the senses for the practise of 'uroscopy' in medieval times and up to the Renaissance is well known. By tasting, smelling and looking, the physician can decide if the patient is ill, in good health, too warm, too dry and so on. Even the temperament of the patient can be identified. Is he more a sanguine, choleric, melancholic or phlegmatic type, and what does this special temperament need in order to remain in good health or to be temperate – like Aristotle would put it? For this practice urine had to be provided, transported and observed very carefully. The smallest impact could influence the colour, smell, texture of the urine, and lead to wrong conclusions.

After a diagnosis, it is especially relevant to the patient what he eats to regain health or to stay healthy. His own temperament and the qualities (moist, dry, cold, warm) and humours by which he is dominated, as well as the qualities of the food he eats, are elementary for his well-being. If you are warm and dry inside because of a fever, you have to eat cold and moist food to get in balance again. Melancholic temperaments, cold and dry by nature, should better choose warm and moist food and so on.

Therefore, in medieval and sixteenth-century herbals, the reader is always informed on the qualities of the plant in order to decide if the herb is good for the patient. If a herbalist is not nearby, a skilled observer could also trust his senses to define what 'temperament' the plant has. Like a physician doing a uroscopy, he can examine the colour, the smell, the taste, the feeling of the plant to identify its qualities. Medieval authors sometimes differ on which sense is the most reliable for analysing a plant. But they all agree, that one has to use all available senses for such a practise. In my talk I would like to show, how to identify the plant's 'temperament' by close observation engaging all of the senses.

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‘Sit, see and hear’: the visual and the aural in early modern prologues and epilogues

Individual prologues and epilogues of Renaissance drama have continually been studied and commented upon, but very little work has been undertaken on these texts as a whole, in order to discover what literary, social, political, or gender concerns are common. In particular, the discovery of a debate about the nature and make-up of the Renaissance audience, carried out in these framing texts has not, so far as I can ascertain, been given serious attention previously.

We talk of going to ‘see’ a play, though the sense through which we normally apprehend dramatic meaning is hearing. My paper argues that the playwrights of the period discerned a distinction between the section of an audience which came simply to view a play for its spectacle and the section that came to hear the words. The recognition of these discrete sets of playgoers and the desire of playwrights to meet their differing requirements was, I contend, a site of debate, mainly carried out in the framing texts – prologues, epilogues and Induction scenes – of the Renaissance period. Citing evidence from the prologues and epilogues of Jonson, Shakespeare, Shirley and other playwrights of the time, I will argue that there was a tension between the visual and aural parts of the theatrical experience, which was not fully resolved before the Interregnum, and was even apparent in Restoration drama. I will also suggest that, for Jonson at least, it was neither the spectator nor the auditor that he wanted to judge his work, but the discerning reader. I will finally discuss the ways in which the dramatists of the time tried, without visible success, to reconcile the needs of what I have termed the ‘dichotomous audience’.

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Vision and discrimination: late medieval perspectives

By the end of the thirteenth century several models of visual perception were available in the Latin West, differing according to the influences — Aristotelian, Augustinian, Avicennian — and their interpretations. One such model was that of geometrical optics, known as perspectivist optics, in the version of Alhacen and popularised by Roger Bacon. The general picture of this theory is well-known but scholars have paid less attention to the issue of the discrimination by a higher cognitive faculty of the incoming sensory information (the *virtus distinctiva*). In my paper I examine what exactly is the role of this discriminative power proposed by Alhacen in the works of Roger Bacon and John Pecham, and how it fits equally well into a passive (Bacon) and active (Pecham) account of perception.

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Ageing, neurodegenerative diseases, and eye problems in the work of medieval scribes

The thirteenth-century scribe known as ‘The Tremulous Hand of Worcester’ annotated a book of Old English herbal remedies with his distinctive trembling script. This writer, who has now been shown to have had essential tremor condition, paid considerable attention to eyesight problems, marking up remedies for dimness of vision and sore eyes amongst others. His writing also records a general increase in size over time, possibly due to eyesight deterioration. If the Tremulous Hand experienced eyesight problems though, they were probably concurrent symptoms: not caused by his neurological condition.

However, other brain disorders have been shown to cause perceptual problems as symptoms, in addition to motor disorders. Parkinson’s disease, for example, can cause difficulties in eye movement, dry eyes, and problems in spatial awareness. Conditions involving dementia can also cause visual impairment. This paper looks at the relationship between brain functioning, perception impairment and scribal writing in the medieval period. It explores the potential and proven impact of visual impairment caused by either ageing

normally, or the onset of age-related neurological conditions. As there is evidence for scribes living past seventy years, we can expect to see evidence of the most common age-related eyesight problems: cataracts and macular degeneration. It also extends beyond the period, to consider evidence for perception impairment in writing to today.

The paper looks for palaeographical evidence for age-related eyesight problems, and the intersection between poor eyesight and other problems such as tremor, dystonia (muscular spasms and abnormal posturing), and dementia. Finally, it considers the effect of vision correction through eyeglasses, and other ways in which a medieval scribe might have compensated for impairments affecting their ability to write.